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**PACIFIC RAILWAY ROUTE,**  
BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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# PACIFIC RAILWAY ROUTE

## BRITISH COLUMBIA.

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*To The Hon. Senators and Members of the House of Commons: —*

As the important question of Pacific Railway Route in British Columbia is likely to occupy the attention of Parliament, I have thought it advisable to prepare a sketch map of that Province, shewing the different Routes that are likely to be considered, and the position of the most prominent places mentioned in the several Reports issued from the Public Works Department on the subject.

The map is devoid of Topography and other detail, in order that the relative position of the different Routes may strike the eye at a glance.

I trust it may be found of some use, and cause a saving of time to those who consider the subject worthy of study.

It will be found on referring to the last Report of 1878, submitted to the Minister of Public Works April 26th of that year, that the question of Route narrowed itself down to a choice of two, one terminating at Esquimalt or Vancouver's Island, and the other at Burrard Inlet, provided it was not thought advisable to make further surveys of a northern line through the Peace River Country to Fort Simpson; and Mr. Fleming after reviewing the two Routes, comes to this conclusion: —

"Upon carefully viewing the engineering features of each route, and weighing every commercial consideration, I am forced to the conclusion that, if these alone are to govern a selection, if a decision cannot be postponed until further examinations be made, if the construction of the Railway must be at once proceeded with, the line to Vancouver Island should, for the present, be rejected, and that the Government should select the route by the Rivers Thompson and Fraser to Burrard Inlet."

In accordance with this recommendation, made after eight years of survey, conducted by most able engineers, at a cost, in the aggregate, of nearly three millions of dollars, I am informed that the late Government, by Order in Council, decided to adopt the Fraser River Route,

terminating at Burrard Inlet, and called for tenders for a section 125 miles in length, from Yale to Savana Ferry.

I presume, after mature consideration, they found that the cost of surveys that would be required to place the Northern Route in a position to make a comparison of distance, grades, and cost with the Fraser River Route, would be so enormous, and the chances of finding a practicable line so remote, that it was thought unadvisable to prosecute them, although Mr. Fleming stated in his report :—

“If, therefore, this northern line is to be seriously considered, it is indispensable that a thorough survey be made of it. With our present knowledge, it will be unwise to adopt it as the route for the Railway and to determine on proceeding with construction, without obtaining full and complete information regarding it. My own opinion is in favor of gaining information, and if the Government entertain this view, I beg leave to suggest that during the present year a continuous exploration be made from Port Simpson, eastwards, to a point of junction with the located line in the neighborhood of Lake Winnipegosis.”

My own impression is that the Government adopted a wise course in abandoning further surveys in that northern country, and in refusing to entertain the advice of Mr. Marcus Smith to commence work on a Route, information about which was so meagre, and which led to a terminus, the disadvantages of which, as against Burrard Inlet, increased when connected with a point nearly 300 miles north of Yellow Head Pass.

From explorations I have myself made in the country west of the Rocky Mountains for the Local Government of British Columbia, and through which a line to reach Fort Simpson must pass, I am convinced that many seasons must be spent in surveys before an intelligent comparison can be made with other routes, and, I believe, with a very poor chance of ultimately obtaining a practicable line.

The arguments in favor of the adoption of the Fraser River Route, with Burrard Inlet as the terminus, and which led to a thorough location survey of that line being made, have turned out to be unmistakably correct, as the facts and figures in the report of Mr. Sandford Fleming of 1878, prove.

The plans and profiles shew a saving in distance of 300 miles over the Bute Inlet Route ; grades greatly superior, as will be seen by referring to the map, two summits on the Bute Inlet Route having to be crossed at an altitude of 3,505 ft. and 3,610 ft., both within a few feet as high as the Rocky Mountain Summit ; the amount of



curvature on the line is slightly in favor of the Fraser River Route, and the cost of construction \$20,000,000 less, with the addition of a fifteen mile ferry.

The facility for carrying on the work of construction on that Route, as compared with Bute Inlet Route, is so great that it is estimated that a deduction of at least 12 per cent., should be made on the cost of all works on this Route below formation level.

By no other route can the Canadian Pacific Railway be expected to draw traffic from Puget Sound, Washington, or Oregon Territory, or to divide with California the Tourists' travel, which is a large source of revenue to the American lines.

In reference to the Harbor of Burrard Inlet, at which the line, as adopted by the late Government, terminates, there appears to be a great misconception in some quarters as to its extent and capabilities, and although the preference has been given to it by a large majority of the best naval authorities, I see in some newspapers that Esquimalt is referred to as the best Harbor on the coast north of San Francisco. I have consequently prepared a sketch shewing the relative sizes of Esquimalt and Burrard Inlet Harbors.

By referring to the map it will be seen that Burrard Inlet is, in superficial area, twenty-five times the size of Esquimalt, with good anchorage almost all over it, and could give a dockage of about fifteen miles at a light cost, by bringing the line of Railway along the south shore of the Inlet from Port Moody to Coal Harbor; in fact if we are ever to have a terminus on our coast that is to command a commerce such as we have a right to expect, it cannot be done at Esquimalt, *for there is no room.*

Some objections have also been made to the navigation to reach Burrard Inlet and Bute Inlet, and Mr. Marcus Smith states in his report of last year: "A list is before me of over sixty marine disasters that have occurred in these waters within a few years."

The following is an extract on the question of the navigation to Burrard Inlet sent me by Mr. Hugh Nelson, formerly M.P. for New Westminster, one of the members of the Moody Milling Co., Burrard Inlet. A perusal of it will shew that the navigation to that Inlet will compare favorably with any port in the world.

Mr. Nelson should be a good authority on this subject, having resided at Burrard Inlet for the last fifteen years, and been directly interested in its shipping :

MOODYVILLE, FEBRUARY, 7th, 1879.

MY DEAR DEWFNEY,—I am just in receipt of yours of the 8th January, and am sorry to say in reply that I am unable to send you full list of vessels that have visited Burrard Inlet for cargoes of lumber for foreign ports. I have tried a number of times to get the vessels sent away by the Hastings Mill Co., and they have either not kept a record or are not inclined to be communicative, and until the time of Clarkson's appointment to the Customs here, no record was kept by this department. I do, however, send you a list of all the vessels that have visited our own mill up to the present date, with their registered tonnage. For the first few years the tonnage is closely approximate, as we only kept a list of the names of the vessels and the amount of lumber taken by them, and as there were only a few vessels prior to 1868, I include in the number and tonnage for that year, not only what properly belongs to it, but also those of the preceding three years :—

1868...	36	Vessels.....	21,000	Registered Tons.
1869....	22	" .....	15,000	"
1870.....	14	" .....	10,000	"
1871.....	19	" .....	12,000	"
1872.....	17	" .....	9,000	"
1873 .....	23	" .....	16,000	"
1874 .....	18	" .....	13,500	"
1875.....	22	" .....	15,600	"
1876.....	22	" .....	17,000	"
1877.....	29	" .....	19,500	"
1878.....	25	" .....	19,655	"
1879.....	3	" .....	3,463	"

250 Ships.

171,718 Reg. Tons.

Making in all 250 ships with an average registered tonnage of about 637 tons. In addition to these, there have been, of course, a large number of coasting schooners, steamers, &c., &c. Out of this large number of ships the only vessel that was lost in British Columbia waters was the barque "Rosalia," in 1868, and she was cast adrift while in tow of the steamer "Isabel," without time having been given her to set a sail, and was consequently blown ashore on Discovery Island. The only vessel lost on voyage to the mill, in British Columbia waters, was the barque "Lunalillo," in Royal Roads, of Esquimalt Harbor, blown a bore from her anchorage almost at the same spot as the Hudson's Bay barque "Lady Lamson" went ashore after being wrecked on Scragg's Rocks, at entrance to Esquimalt Harbor. The only other vessel leaving our mill that received damages necessitating the discharge of any portion of her cargo was the barque "Ruby," that also went ashore in Royal Roads, and had to be taken into Esquimalt, a portion of her cargo discharged, and receive repairs. Not a single vessel of any tonnage ever received damage either coming in through the narrows or going out, necessitating repairs to the extent of one hundred dollars, and yet these narrows are represented as the great bug-bear.

Before the next mail, I will try again to get a list from the Hastings people, and if successful will forward it to you, but failing success, I suppose it would be fair to assume that a like number of ships have visited their mill, making in all 50 ships, say, in a period of ten years, with an average registered tonnage of nearly 700 tons each, and only two ships lost on their outward voyage in British Columbia waters, viz ; "Rosalia" and "Cornelius."



A claim has been put forward that Burrard Inlet is not an Ocean harbor. I think such a statement as the foregoing will prove the untruthfulness of this slander.

(Signed) H. NELSON.

Another advantage to the Fraser Route is that it would be an all rail route, and no Ferries to cause inconvenience to traffic.

The principal arguments against the adoption of the Burrard Inlet Route are the following :—1st, That it runs for some few miles in close proximity to the American Boundary, and that a line could be extended from a point on ours to Holmes' Harbor, Puget Sound, a distance of about 60 miles, and thus assist the Americans to build up a port and virtually take our terminus from us.

I think that objection is easily answered. It undoubtedly lies with us whether we allow a connection to be made. Our line runs on the north bank of Fraser River, and a bridge of an enormously expensive character, and one that should not interfere with navigation of ships drawing 12 feet of water, would have to be constructed before a junction could be made with us. No obstruction should be placed in the river that would prevent the passage of Her Majesty's gun-boats, which can navigate very near the point south of which connection must be made by any line reaching a terminus in American territory.

In the year 1858 the Hudson Bay Company's ship "Otter," of about 400 tons and drawing 12 feet of water, reached that point, and the mark still exists on the bluff made by the Captain on that memorable trip.

By inspection of the map, the position of Holmes' Harbor can be seen, and it will be evident that without a canal cut through a neck of land, the distance from the ocean to reach it will not be much less than to Burrard Inlet, but I have the best authority for stating that a canal is impracticable, and was never seriously contemplated by any one, and I fear our Acting Engineer-in-Chief must have been hoaxed by some interested individual, as he appears to attach much importance to it. Some enterprising Americans did, at three different points on Puget Sound, lay off bogus town sites, and endeavored to sell lots at what they called the Northern Pacific Terminus. One was laid off at Holmes' Harbor, and to the uninformed, the scheme of cutting a canal looked very feasible on the map, but the whole thing was nothing but a swindling operation, got up for the purpose of taking in the public.

I myself would not object to see a connection made with the railway system of Washington and Oregon Territories. The outcry has always been on this side of the Dominion that there would be a want of local traffic on the Pacific Railway. This connection would greatly assist us in that particular, for I contend that the advantages of our route would be such as to command a large amount of the transcontinental traffic of the adjoining territories of the United States, even if the Northern Pacific was constructed.

But there are very strong reasons for believing that the Northern Pacific will not be extended in a continuous line to the Pacific. The barrenness of the country west of the point to which the last contract is let, the difficulties of the work as it approaches the Pacific, the high summits to be crossed, necessitating very heavy grades, the construction of a line from Ogden to Portland, on the Columbia, by the Union Pacific, which will secure the transcontinental traffic that the Northern Pacific expected to get, are among a few of the obstacles in its way.

There are other arguments which should not be overlooked in favour of our line—Customs Regulations, Bonding Fees, and other complications consequent on passing through a foreign country—and the last and not least, the advantage we have in distance on our line, it being 400 miles in our favour from the Pacific to Lake Superior. This alone should give us almost a monopoly of the traffic.

2nd. The military aspect. This objection needs but a passing remark. Naval and military authorities are almost unanimous in considering it of slight importance, for they contend that “the country that holds naval superiority in the Straits of Fuca will control the commerce.” There can be no doubt about that; and unless we have it, we can no more do business at Esquimalt than we can at Burrard Inlet.

Since writing the above, I have noticed in the *New Westminster Pacific Herald* a very able article on this subject, and append it.

Trusting you will find the maps and these notes of service,

I remain,

Your obedient servant,

E. DEWDNEY.



Taking, first, the leading idea of all the Island contributors to the discussion, viz., that Esquimalt *must* be the terminus, in order, as they argue, to give the Canadian Pacific a chance to compete successfully with American transcontinental lines. Now, we think it may be stated as a proposition which will admit of no dispute, that the *shortest* line, in these go-ahead days, will naturally have the best chance in any such competition, provided that line does not possess any serious counterbalancing disadvantage, such as great cost in constructing or heavy expense in operating. And it may also be taken for granted that the line which can be most cheaply maintained and operated will have a great deal in its favour. Taking the question of distance first, we turn to Mr. Fleming's latest report, and find this :—

Let us assume, for the sake of the argument, that a railway is completed and in operation to both points, Burrard Inlet and Esquimalt, and a person at Esquimalt desires to travel to Ottawa. He has the option of crossing by steamer, 90 miles, to Burrard Inlet, and then using the railway, or of taking the train at Esquimalt and proceeding on his journey from that point. In the latter case he would, taking the most favourable view, have to travel some 150 miles farther; or, if the line were carried through by Pine River Pass, fully 200 miles more than by way of Burrard Inlet.

It is evident that even were the wide channels at the Valdes Islands bridged, the Railway carried to Esquimalt would present no advantage in time or cost to an ordinary traveller. If passengers from Esquimalt could secure no benefit from the extension of the Railway to that place, it is certain that there would be a loss sustained by carrying freight by the longer route.

This, coming from the Chief Engineer, must be acknowledged to be exceedingly strong testimony in favor of the Fraser Route, in the matter of distance, proving, as it does, that by that route, passengers and freight could most speedily perform the journey. Now, considering the question of cost, we turn again to the same report, and find this :—

The cost of extending the Railway to Esquimalt would greatly exceed that of taking it to Burrard Inlet; there are no sufficient data to form a proper estimate of the cost. But even by leaving a gap near Valdes Islands of fifteen miles, and substituting a ferry for the enormously costly bridging at that locality, the excess would probably reach \$15,000,000 or \$20,000,000. The cost of maintenance would be great in proportion, and the annual losses on working the extra mileage would, under the peculiar circumstances, be serious.

Turning now to Mr. H. J. Cambie's carefully studied report, we find the cost of building the line to English Bay, Burrard Inlet, estimated at \$32,000,000, while the cost of the line to Esquimalt is set down at \$52,000,000, *without* what Mr. Fleming calls the "enormously costly bridging" of the Straits. We will, therefore, be well within the mark in estimating the cost of an all rail line to Esquimalt

(and no other would be worth a but'on in competition with foreign lines) at just double that of a similar line to Burrard Inlet, involving, of course, a double charge for interest. In the same report, the cost of *maintaining* the line to Esquimalt is calculated to exceed the same charge on the line to Burrard Inlet, by \$693,000 a year, including an allowance for a ferry, or, say \$600,000 a year for an all rail route. Here, then, we have the line to Esquimalt saddled with an *extra* cost of about \$1,800,000 a year, for interest and maintenance; and for what? In order that passengers and freight may have to travel 150 or 200 miles farther, and arrive at their destination one or two days later! And, as Mr. Cambie justly observes, rates for through traffic will be governed by competing lines, and not by mileage. So far, then even looking at the line wholly with respect to the through traffic—leaving out of sight the unification of the Dominion, and the colonization of the country, for which purposes the Fraser Route is admittedly unequalled—we find an enormous balance of advantages in favor of the line terminating at Burrard Inlet. Into what is called the military aspect of the question, we have not time to enter now. It can easily be shown, however, that even here the Fraser Route will compare well with its rival. Suffice it, for the present, to say that we have the authority of General Sir Selby Smythe for treating the military objections to the Fraser Route lightly; and, even if it were otherwise, we have the authority of a thousand years of glorious memories for saying that the British Lion is little likely to go skulking up among northern icebergs, with his tail between his legs, scared by the shadowy possibility of future danger.

TABLE OF DISTANCES from Summit of Rocky Mountains to Pacific Ocean Harbors.

		Comparative cost.
Fraser River Route to Port Moody, Burrard Inlet, 489 miles	\$31,000,000	
“ Extended to Coal Harbor.....501	“	
Bute Inlet Route to Esquimalt, including 15 miles		
ferry from Frederick Arm to Otter Cove.....795	“	52,000,000





